

Update on current issues

Purpose of report

For information/ noting.

Summary

This report updates Members on current issues of interest to the Board which are not covered elsewhere in the agenda. Updates are included on:

- Visitor Economy
- Public libraries
- Entertainment licensing
- Sport and physical activity

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the update.

Action

Officer to action as appropriate.

Update on current issues

Visitor Economy

1. Cllr Flick Rea MBE launched the LGA's new visitor economy publication at a well-attended workshop at the LGA's Annual Conference on 2 July. The publication brings together new case studies showcasing how councils are leading growth through boosting visitor numbers and sets out policy changes that will enable councils to fully unlock the growth potential of tourism. At the LGA Annual Conference delegates debated key issues and shared good practice with James Berresford, Chief Executive of VisitEngland, Councillor Ann Steward from Breckland District Council and Councillor Wendy Simon from Liverpool City Council.
2. Copies of the publication will be available for Members at the CTS Board.

Public Libraries

3. Arts Council England (ACE) has published the results of the Envisioning the Library of the Future research project. The research covers a review of innovations in libraries, an analysis of future trends and public opinion data. ACE has identified four priorities it believes are necessary to sustain and develop a 21st century public library service:
 - 3.1. place the library as the hub of a community
 - 3.2. make the most of digital technology and creative media
 - 3.3. ensure that libraries are resilient and sustainable
 - 3.4. deliver the right skills for those who work for libraries
4. The priorities and findings from the research confirm the issues many councils are currently grappling with and the solutions and approaches it discusses reinforces the reality in many public libraries. The LGA already works in partnership with ACE to run political leadership seminars for library portfolio holder (the next one is on 12 September) and we are collaborating with the Society of Chief Librarians on issues including Universal Credit and public health. The LGA has urged ACE to ensure that Envisioning reflects all of this existing activity and we will shortly be invited to participate in a discussion about next steps.

Entertainment Licensing

5. Hugh Robertson MP, Minister for Sport and Tourism, has written to all local authorities (**Annex A**) outlining changes to the entertainment licensing under the Licensing Act 2003. Revised guidance will remove the need for entertainment licenses, between 8am and 11pm, for performances of plays and exhibitions of dance (up to audience limits of 500 people) and indoor sport up to audiences of 1,000 people. The Minister has confirmed that combined fighting sports, such as Mixed Martial Arts, remain licensable as boxing or wrestling activities.
6. Concerts, plays, community and fundraising events are a huge and important part of cultural life in this country and councils want to make it as easy as possible for people

to hold them. Small events, festivals and cultural activities are also worth up to £2 billion each year to the UK economy, making them desirable for any area looking to support growth.

7. The LGA supported the deregulation of low-scale community events, but at the same time we argued it remained important that local authorities were able to act on the concerns of residents, particularly when it comes to late-night concerts and parties held close to people's homes. Ministers listened to the LGA and councils and scaled down their original plans to deregulate events attended by crowds of up to 5,000 people to a more sensible threshold of 500 for most events.

Sport and physical activity

8. Sport England's Active People 7 results have revealed that 15.3 million people are playing sport once a week, every week. That is 1.4 million more than in 2005 when the UK won the bid to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games and indicates that most of the increase seen following the Games in 2012 has been retained.
9. When the figures were last published in December 2012 they showed 750,000 more people playing sport than the previous year. Six months on, despite the coldest March for 50 years, growth of 530,000 has been maintained. Sports such as football, golf and even cycling, one of the strongest performing sports of recent years, have all been affected.
10. The results were particularly notable for what they reveal about young people's participation, which is the Government's key legacy priority. The number of young people aged between 16 and 25 playing sport regularly has reached 3.86 million. This is an increase of nearly 63,000 on the previous 12 months, with strong advances in sports such as basketball and swimming.
11. There are also more women playing sport, with netball still continuing to attract high numbers of female players and record numbers of women taking-up boxing. Although there is still a significant gap between the number of disabled people and non-disabled people playing sport, the figures for disabled people have been rising steadily since 2005. The latest figures show an increase of 46,600 over the past year with Paralympic sports like equestrianism and athletics growing in popularity.
12. The LGA responded to the announcement by highlighting that despite managing severe government funding cuts, councils are committed to making the most of the enthusiasm generated by the 2012 Games and work closely with their local sports clubs, schools, businesses and community groups to maximise their diminished resources and provide as many options as possible for residents of all ages.
13. A particular priority for the LGA is supporting councils to maximise the contribution of local sporting opportunities to improving public health outcomes, and this is one of key learning topics at the Sport Leadership Academies we run jointly with Sport England. The fifth Academy has just completed and we have reached nearly 100 sport portfolio holders through the Academies and peer support.